found in the specification, for example at page 5, lines 2-4. Claim 9 is amended to revise "comprises" to "is selected from the group consisting of."

No new matter is added.

The attached Appendix includes a marked-up copy of each rewritten claim (37 C.F.R. §1.121(c)(1)(ii)).

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; (d) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (e) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiner Zirker in the April 2, 2002 interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is included in the following remarks.

I. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

Claims 7 and 9 were rejected by the Patent Office under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph for allegedly failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

By this Amendment, claim 7 is canceled. Thus, the rejection to claim 7 is now moot.

The Patent Office alleges that claim 9 should use Markush language instead of the term "comprises." By this Amendment, claim 9 is amended to revise "comprises" to "is selected from the group consisting of." Applicants submit that claim 9 fully complies with

the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1-3 were rejected by the Patent Office under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Applicants' admission regarding the prior art as set forth on page 1 of the specification. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The present invention claims a formed lining for a vehicle comprising a base member and a top cover member. The base member comprises a film-like hot melt adhesive on a front thereof. The top cover member comprises a web-like hot melt adhesive on a back thereof. The top cover member is then bonded to the base member by bonding the entire surface of the web-like hot melt adhesive to the film-like hot melt adhesive and the formed lining has a laminated structure and is substantially free of trapped air bubbles (claim 1). The top cover may further comprise a cushion layer (claim 2).

As set forth in the Amendment filed November 28, 2001, the most important claimed feature of the present invention is that the adhesive used in the top cover member is a web-like hot melt adhesive.

The prior art fails to anticipate the present invention because the prior art fails to disclose, explicitly or implicitly, each and every aspect of the claimed invention.

In particular, the prior art fails to disclose a vehicle lining comprising a top cover member comprising a web-like hot melt adhesive on a front thereof. The prior art only discloses where a film-like hot melt adhesive is applied to a top cover member of the vehicle lining.

A web-like hot melt adhesive is not the same as a film-like hot melt adhesive. A web-like hot melt adhesive allows for regions on the top cover member where there is no adhesive

present. This region without adhesive allows for air to escape through the top cover member when the top cover member is pressed and glued to a base member.

A film-like hot melt adhesive entails coating the entire back surface of the top cover member. Thus, regions without adhesive are not formed, and thus, air cannot escape through the top cover member.

Further, the present invention is a formed lining for a vehicles that is substantially free of trapped air bubbles. The invention is substantially free of trapped air bubbles because of the web-like hot melt adhesive that bonds the top member to the base member. The prior art is unable to teach being substantially free of trapped air bubbles because the film-like hot melt adhesive of the top member of the prior art does not permit the air to escape. As such, the final product of the prior art traps air as pockets between the top member and the base member. The final product of the present invention does not trap the air as in the prior art because of the web-like hot melt adhesive on the top member. Thus, the prior art fails to teach the present invention.

Thus, Applicants submit that the prior art fails to anticipate the present invention because the prior art fails to disclose a vehicle lining comprising a top cover member comprising a web-like hot melt adhesive. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-3 and 7-11 were rejected by the Patent Office under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Applicant's admission regarding the prior art as set forth on page 1 of the specification. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As set forth above, the prior art fails to teach or suggest a vehicle lining comprising a top cover member comprising a web-like hot melt adhesive on a back thereof.

Applicants admit that a formed lining for a vehicle comprising a top cover member and a base member, wherein the top cover member is bonded to the base member is known in the prior art. However, the prior art teaches and suggests only where the top cover member has a film-like hot melt adhesive on a backside, and where the base member comprises a film-like hot melt adhesive on a front side. Nowhere in the prior art is it taught or suggested that a web-like hot melt adhesive can be used to bond together a base member and a top cover member of a vehicle lining such that the formed vehicle lining is substantially free of trapped air bubbles.

The Patent Office alleges that the paragraph bridging pages 7 and 8 of the specification is too vague to support an argument that the present invention is superior to known formed linings for vehicles.

Typically, an adhesive for bonding a base member and a top cover member of a vehicle lining is a film that coats the entire surface of the base member and the top cover member that are to be bonded to each other. Obviously, air is present between the coated base member surface and the coated top cover member surface, such that, when the coated base member and the coated top cover member are pressed together, some air may become trapped as air bubbles between the base member comprising a film-like hot melt adhesive and the top cover member comprising a film-like hot melt adhesive.

Air bubbles trapped between the film-like hot melt adhesive of the base member and the top cover member of a vehicle lining are undesired because they result in a bumpy and/or wave-like surface of the vehicle lining, that is thus not aesthetically pleasing.

The present invention, however, claims that a web-like hot melt adhesive is applied to the backside of a top cover member of a vehicle lining. A web-like hot melt adhesive is superior to that of the film-like hot melt adhesive because the web-like hot melt adhesive

does not form a complete air-tight seal between the top cover member and the base member of the vehicle lining.

A web-like hot melt adhesive does not entirely coat the back surface of the top cover member as a film-like adhesive. The web-like adhesive leaves regions of the backside of the top cover member wherein there is no applied adhesive.

Thus, in the present invention, as the top cover member comprising a web-like hot melt adhesive on its back is pressed to the base member comprising a film-like hot melt adhesive on its front, air that would normally be trapped if the top cover member comprised a film-like hot melt adhesive is able to permeate the top cover member in the regions where there is no adhesive applied to the top cover member.

Since this normally trapped air is able to permeate the top cover member in regions where there is no web-like hot melt adhesive, air bubbles do not form between the top cover member and the base member of a vehicle lining. Thus, the present invention comprising a top cover member comprising a web-like hot melt adhesive is superior over the prior art comprising a film-like hot melt adhesive on the top cover member because the present invention allows for the release of trapped air from the components of a vehicle lining, and thereby allows the lining to be substantially free of trapped air bubbles.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the prior art fails to teach or suggest the present invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-6 and 8-11 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

William P. Berridge
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WPB:DML/rxg

Attachment:
Appendix

Date: April 12, 2002

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION
Please grant any extension necessary for entry;
Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461

APPENDIX

Changes to Claims:

Claim 7 is canceled.

The following are marked-up versions of the amended claims:

1. (Amended) A formed lining for a vehicle, comprising:

a base member comprising a film-like hot melt adhesive on a front thereof; and

a top cover member comprising a web-like hot melt adhesive on a back thereof;

wherein the top cover member is bonded to the base member by bonding the whole surface of the web-like hot melt adhesive to the film-like hot melt adhesive, and the formed lining has a laminated structure and is substantially free of trapped air bubbles.

4. (Amended) A method for manufacturing a formed lining for a vehicle, comprising the steps of:

preparing a top cover member comprising a web-like hot melt adhesive previously laminated on a back thereof, and a plate-like base member comprising a thermoplastic resin and a film-like hot melt adhesive previously laminated on a front of the base member;

heating the base member;

setting the top cover member and the heated base member in a forming die;

melting the web-like hot melt adhesive of the top cover member by heat of the base member; and

forming the top cover member and the base member at the same time that the top cover member and the base member being bonded and substantially free of trapped air bubbles.

9. (Amended) The formed lining for a vehicle according to claim 1, wherein the web-like hot melt adhesive ~~comprises~~ is selected from the group consisting of polyamide, vinyl acetate, ethylene-ethyl acrylate copolymer, polyolefin and polyethylene terephthalate.